

# Pueblo *exchange*

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction

## U.S. Army closes first chemical weapons disposal facility

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Fall 2003

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(719) 546-0400  
Hours 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., M-F  
Other hours by appointment

#### **Pueblo Chemical Depot Public Affairs Officer**

(719) 549-4135

#### **Bechtel Pueblo Team**

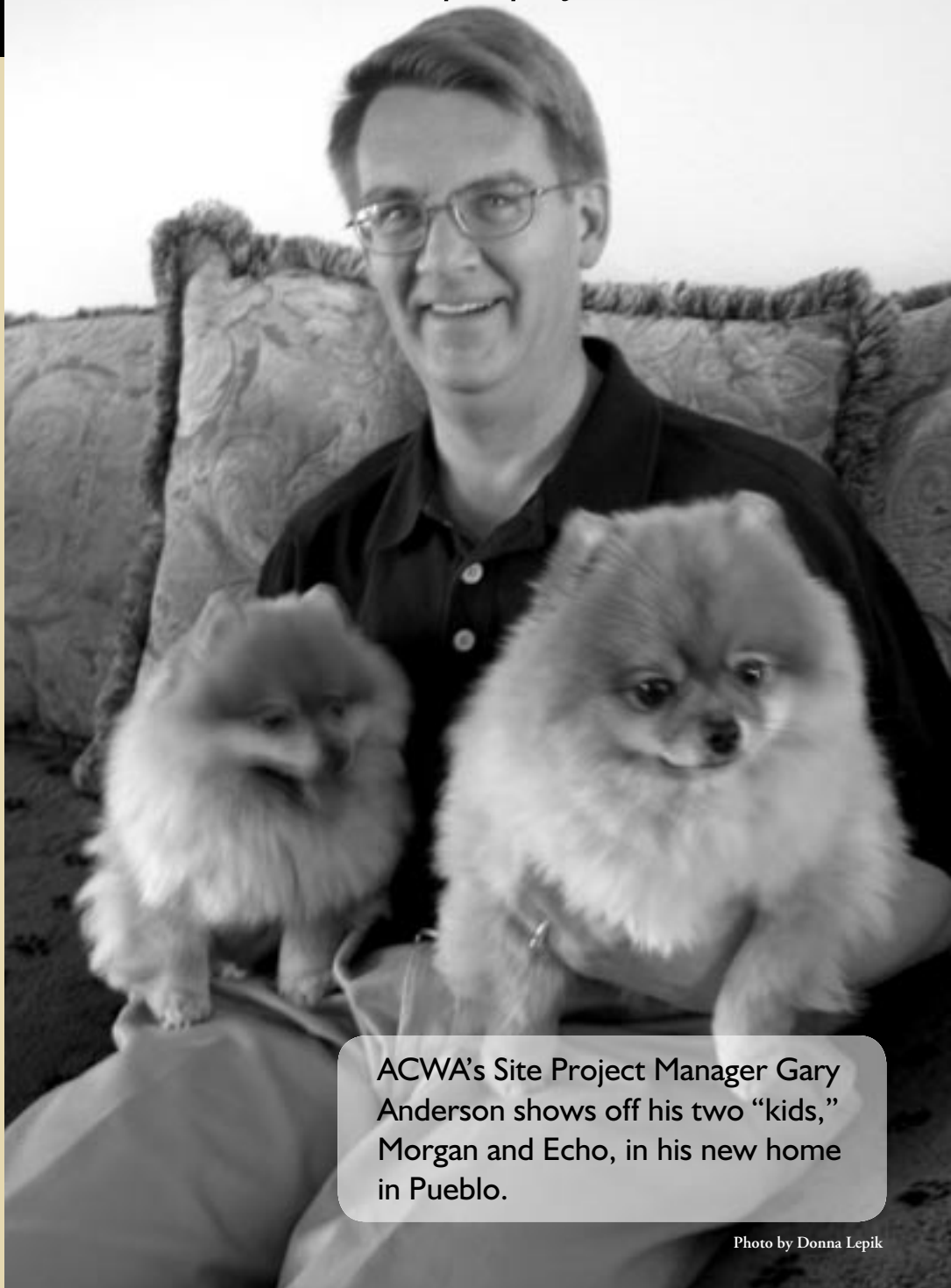
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Program Manager Assembled  
Chemical Weapons Alternatives

[www.pmacwa.army.mil](http://www.pmacwa.army.mil)

## ‘Safety is the number one priority’ *Anderson discusses depot project* (see page 2)



ACWA's Site Project Manager Gary Anderson shows off his two “kids,” Morgan and Echo, in his new home in Pueblo.

Photo by Donna Lepik

## Anderson discusses depot project

In July, the Program Manager for the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives named Gary Anderson as site project manager for the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant project. The *Pueblo exchange* spoke with Anderson about his role in the weapons disposal program.

**Pueblo exchange (PE):** Tell us about your background in chemical weapons disposal.

**Gary Anderson (GA):** Prior to my selection as the site project manager, I worked at two chemical weapons incinerator plants. My first position was as a facility representative at the Johnston Atoll Chemical Agent Disposal System (JACADS), from October 1998 until May 2000. As a facility representative, I was responsible for contract oversight of the systems contractor's daily plant operations, ensuring that the plant was operated safely and in accordance with the limiting conditions of operations. From JACADS, I moved to Umatilla, Oregon, assuming the responsibilities of the deputy site project

manager. I worked with the staff to develop the Army's policies and procedures, performing contract oversight of the systems contractor's construction, systemization and operations tasks.

**PE:** What is your role as ACWA's Site Project Manager?

**GA:** My role is multifaceted and I see four main areas of responsibility: contract oversight, coordination with the Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD), coordination with ACWA headquarters and the Department of Defense and finally, integration of the project with the community. Contract oversight is accomplished by a team of Army professionals, ranging from the contracting officers to the technical personnel who evaluate contract deliverables. PCD, ACWA and Bechtel personnel have a tremendous experience and knowledge base that is critical to the success of the project. Strong coordination amongst these groups will make the project more efficient and more effective.

Finally, integration of the community in the project is most important. This integration occurs on many levels and includes a great number of people. My commitment to the community is for open, honest and timely communication throughout the life of this critical project.

**PE:** What is the current status of the PCAPP project?

**GA:** The project is moving along at a very brisk pace. Project personnel are on site and setting up their offices. The infrastructure of policies, plans and procedures is being written and implemented. Three major milestones will be accomplished in the next three months. First, Bechtel assumes contractual responsibility for Outreach Office operations as of Nov. 1, 2003. Second, the Stage I Research, Development and Demonstration (RD&D) permit application is submitted to the Colorado Department of Public Health

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## Site public affairs officer marks milestone

Marilyn M. Thompson, public affairs officer for the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot, recently marked her 12th year with the Depot. In April, she observed her 35th year of federal service.

Thompson's duties include community outreach and media relations, as well as providing information to workers and contractors on Pueblo Chemical Depot in the operational area of the depot, emergency preparedness and the chemical disposal program.

Prior to her current position, Thompson worked as a public affairs specialist for the Army Recruiting Battalion in Salt Lake City. During this two-year assignment, she honed her skills by setting up displays, bringing in spokespeople to local high schools, working with the media, and providing additional community outreach support. A 1984 to 1986 stint in the public affairs office at Tooele

Army Depot in Utah added a strong historical background in chemical storage and disposal to her resumé. Her familiarity with public affairs and chemical storage and disposal procedures enabled her to jump right in to her current position.

She is extremely active in the community. Thompson served on the board of directors for the Southeastern Chapter of the American Red Cross, has been a member of the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce for 12 years, an ambassador for the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce for three years, a member of the Latino Chamber for 12 years, and a Junior Achievement participant for five years.

A Pueblo Chemical Depot resident, Thompson walks to work each day. "I feel as though I live and work in the safest place in the United States," said Thompson. "It is beautiful here on the depot and I thoroughly



*Marilyn Thompson, Public Affairs Officer for the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot*

enjoy my job and the many challenges it brings. I have met so many wonderful people in Pueblo and have felt a part of the Pueblo community since the moment I arrived 12 years ago. My husband and I, and, of course, our four-legged companions, plan to retire in Pueblo and continue to be a part of this great community."

Photo by Lori Waters

# The end of the beginning at Johnston Atoll

The year 2003 has had a series of firsts for the U.S. Army's chemical weapons disposal program. Notable among those firsts is the closure of the U.S. Army's first full-scale chemical weapons disposal facility, the Johnston Atoll Chemical Agent Disposal System (JACADS).

The Army began its mission of disposing of the entire U.S. stockpile of chemical weapons with those located on a small island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Though tiny, Johnston Island is the site of great moments and historic firsts in the history of U.S. chemical weapons stockpile destruction.

From the time JACADS was built in 1986, thousands of men and women have lived and worked less than a mile from the chemical weapons stockpile.

Thanks to these dedicated men and women, on Nov. 29, 2000, JACADS completed disposal of the Johnston Island chemical weapons stockpile, and in early 2001, JACADS became the first U.S. facility to officially enter closure.

This was accomplished while protecting the workers and the environment. In fact,

according to independent surveys and studies, the fish and bird populations are prospering. The coral reef that is Johnston Atoll is one of the few thriving reef systems in the world.

JACADS closure activities on Johnston Atoll will end in late 2003. *(Editor's note: as of Aug. 22, 2003, JACADS closure was four weeks ahead of schedule.)*

Because each of the eight disposal sites in the continental U.S. eventually will go through closure, program personnel are paying close attention to JACADS to ensure that valuable experience and insight from that site is shared.

The year 2003 is also a year of firsts for several other U.S. stockpile sites. The Aberdeen Chemical Agent Disposal Facility in Maryland and the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility in Alabama both started agent disposal operations, and the Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility, which has recently celebrated seven years of operations, completed its agent changeover and started its disposal campaign for nerve agent VX.

Also in 2003, the Army completed construction of a neutralization facility for bulk agent stored at the Newport Chemical Depot in Indiana.



JACADS during chemical weapons disposal operations.

Responsibility for full-scale pilot testing of neutralization technologies to destroy the assembled chemical weapons stockpiles at Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado and Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky was designated to the Department of Defense's Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program.

The experiences at JACADS, the Aberdeen Chemical Agent Disposal Facility and the Tooele Chemical Agent Disposal Facility are being used to improve the processes and facilities at the other sites as they prepare to begin agent disposal operations. The Army and its contract teams constantly strive to update their proven safe disposal methods through research, new technology and the experiences of each disposal site. Working with agencies such as the EPA and the National Research Council, the Army ensures that the community and the environment are protected.

This year, 2003, has been a banner year for the Army's chemical weapons disposal program. The firsts have been many, and with JACADS completing closure, the beginning of U.S. chemical weapons disposal is truly coming to an end.

JACADS worker supervises demolition of the explosion containment rooms at the JACADS facility.



File Photograph

## Anderson discusses depot project

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and Environment (CDPHE) in December 2003. In connection with the permit, the Army is reviewing the Stage I RD&D permit application and Bechtel is working with the CDPHE to announce and advertise the pre-application public meeting, to be held in early December 2003. Third, the initial facility design will be submitted to the Army in January 2004.

**PE:** There has been much discussion about this project's economic impact on Pueblo. By its very nature, this project is temporary. What is ACWA doing to prevent a potential 'boom 'n bust' cycle?

**GA:** ACWA, Bechtel and community leaders met in the spring of this year to discuss sustainable development. Sustainable development is a process in which, in this case, ACWA, Bechtel and the community work together to meet the economic needs of the community over the long term.

As an example, at the completion of the current project the community will have a highly trained and qualified work force. By understanding the talents of that work force, the community may keep these employees by seeking out another industry to use established work force. The idea of sustainable development is being explored by the Public Involvement Working Group, a sub-committee of the Citizens Advisory Commission.

**PE:** Safety is always at the forefront of the chemical weapons disposal; what do you want to share with the community regarding ACWA's commitment to safety and public health?

**GA:** You saved the most important question for last. Safety is the number one priority of the project. That means safety is the number one priority for Bechtel, PCD and ACWA. As part of the design effort, Bechtel has reviewed

all the lessons learned from the other six chemical disposal sites. This has resulted in design improvements and enhanced safety features. Additionally, Bechtel and Army personnel are analyzing the equipment destruction neutralization processes, identifying possible hazards, and tracking them in a database. Project designers strive to avoid identified hazards in every design, and improve operation and maintenance of the equipment. Eliminating the stockpile in the safest, most effective manner is our number one priority. The project team will continue to work with the community, CDPHE and other stakeholders to ensure that safety and public health issues are dealt with swiftly and effectively.



## Partners in Pueblo Chemical Weapons Destruction Program

The following is a summary of key program partners and their roles and missions in the shared goal to safely and effectively dispose of the chemical weapons stockpile at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot.

### Pueblo Chemical Depot Community Outreach Office

The Pueblo Chemical Depot Community Outreach Office informs stakeholders about the chemical weapons destruction program. The office works closely with elected officials, community groups, individual citizens, the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program, Pueblo Chemical Depot, emergency preparedness agencies and others to ensure a comprehensive public outreach and involvement program.

- **Contact: Bob Kennemer, Pueblo Chemical Depot Community Outreach Office, (719) 546-0400, [crkennem@bechtel.com](mailto:crkennem@bechtel.com)**

### U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot

The Pueblo Chemical Depot, or PCD, is located east of Pueblo, Colorado. It is a 23,000-acre Army installation that is responsible for the safe and secure storage of a portion of the chemical weapons stockpile of mustard agent. The depot has been in operation since 1942 and has stored chemical agent since the early 1950s. Lt. Col. John A. Becker is the depot commander.

- **Contact: Marilyn Thompson, Pueblo Chemical Depot Public Affairs Office, (719) 549-4135, [mmthomps@pcd-emh1.pcd.army.mil](mailto:mmthomps@pcd-emh1.pcd.army.mil) or Lorraine Waters, (719) 549-4135, [lorraine.waters@pcd-emh1.pcd.army.mil](mailto:lorraine.waters@pcd-emh1.pcd.army.mil)**

### Bechtel Pueblo Team

The Bechtel Pueblo team is the systems contractor selected by the Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (PMACWA) to design, build, test, operate and close the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant.

- **Contact: John Schlatter, Bechtel Pueblo Team Public Involvement Manager, (719) 543-7043, [jfschlat@bechtel.com](mailto:jfschlat@bechtel.com)**

### Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives

The program was established to demonstrate alternative technologies to baseline incineration for the destruction of assembled chemical weapons. Additionally, PMACWA is responsible for the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpiles stored at the Pueblo Chemical Depot and the Blue Grass Army Depot. PMACWA is headquartered at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

- **Contact: Kathy DeWeese, PMACWA Public Affairs, (410) 436-3398, [katherine.deweese@us.army.mil](mailto:katherine.deweese@us.army.mil), or log onto [www.pmacwa.army.mil](http://www.pmacwa.army.mil) for more information.**

### Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

The mission of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is to protect public health and the environment. The department is responsible for enforcing the Hazardous Waste Regulations in the state of Colorado, and will consider the Army's application for a permit for the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant. Representatives of the Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division actively participate in meetings regarding chemical weapons destruction in Colorado.

- **Contact: Doug Knappe, (303) 692-3414 or toll free: (888) 569-1831, ext. 3414, [doug.knappe@state.co.us](mailto:doug.knappe@state.co.us)**
- **Contact: Jeannine Natterman, (888) 569-1831, ext. 3303, [jeannine.natterman@state.co.us](mailto:jeannine.natterman@state.co.us)**



### **Colorado Citizens' Advisory Commission**

The Colorado Citizens' Advisory Commission, or CAC, serves as a bridge between the community and the Government by providing a forum for exchanging information about chemical weapons disposal. The Governor of Colorado appoints members of the CAC, including private citizens, who represent the local community. The CAC conducts public meetings to facilitate consistent public participation in the chemical weapons destruction program.

- **Contact: John Klomp, Chair, (719) 583-6536**
- **Contact: Jeannine Natterman, (888) 569-1831, ext. 3303, [jeannine.natterman@state.co.us](mailto:jeannine.natterman@state.co.us)**

### **Colorado CAC Permitting Working Group**

The Colorado CAC Permitting Working Group's mission is to expedite the planning, development and implementation of all aspects of the environmental permitting process for the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant.

- **Contact: Co-chairs, Doug Knappe (888) 569-1831, ext. 3414, Irene Kornelly (719) 591-5157, or Jerry Starnes (410) 436-3187**

### **Colorado CAC Public Involvement Working Group**

This CAC subcommittee was established to assess public involvement opportunities and ensure the community is informed about chemical weapons destruction activities.

- **Contact: John Klomp, Working Group Chair, (719) 591-5157**

### **Colorado CAC Acceleration Options Working Group**

This CAC subcommittee was established to study potential impacts of accelerating the disposal of chemical weapons at the Pueblo Chemical Depot.

- **Contact: Ross Vincent, Working Group Chair, (719) 561-3117**

### **Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program**

This program involves the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot, the Pueblo County Department of Emergency Management, the Colorado Office of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Colorado Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program, known as CSEPP, enhances the emergency preparedness of the county, depot and state through equipment, personnel, training and public awareness.

- **Contact: Rochelle Cruz, Pueblo County Department of Emergency Management Public Information Officer, (719) 583-6222, [cruz@co.pueblo.co.us](mailto:cruz@co.pueblo.co.us)**
- **Contact: Marilyn Thompson, U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot Public Affairs Officer, (719) 549-4135, [marilyn.thompson@pcd.army.mil](mailto:marilyn.thompson@pcd.army.mil)**
- **Contact: Polly White, Colorado Office of Emergency Management, (303) 273-1860, [polly.white@state.co.us](mailto:polly.white@state.co.us)**
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